

program so that every American will be able to continue to stay on their health care, still be able to allow their children to stay on their health care, and still be able to get health care without being penalized for a pre-existing condition.

Let us work together to make health care affordable for all Americans.

#### CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the Republican plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to address two critical public health issues that are important to the families of Maryland's Fourth Congressional District.

Nearly 26 million Americans are estimated to have chronic kidney disease. 700,000 people, including 3,000 in my district in Prince George's County, have irreversible kidney failure or end-stage renal disease often because of complications of diabetes and high blood pressure, where you cannot survive without a kidney transplant or dialysis treatment. And 70 percent of those patients are on dialysis treatment at least three times per week.

This is a serious issue for us to consider today because nearly 50 percent of all end-stage renal disease patients rely on Medicaid. If we pass the Republican plan to gut Medicaid, we are making life-and-death choices for these patients who are disproportionately seniors, minorities, and some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

I saw the potential impact of these brutal cuts on my constituents when I toured a DaVita Dialysis facility in my district. Nearly half of all people with end-stage renal disease in Prince George's County are being treated at a DaVita facility. There I got to speak to several patients receiving lifesaving treatment, and I heard how important it was for them to have access to dialysis.

Many of these patients simply would not get care if it wasn't for the Medicaid expansion, subsidies to afford quality health coverage, and the consumer protections under the Affordable Care Act that prevent health plans from denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions and prohibiting insurers from dropping people from plans when they become ill. These are real people who will suffer the consequences of our actions if we pass this pay-more-for-less bill.

As Republicans rush to pass this bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with more expensive and worse care, we are also turning a blind eye to the impact on the opioid crisis that is ravaging many of our communities. In my district in Anne Arundel County, the number of people killed by heroin and opioid overdoses in 2016 was more than the prior 2 years combined.

□ 1100

Records show there have been more overdoses in the first 3 months of 2017 than all of 2016. And last week alone, over a 24-hour period, there were 16 overdoses and 3 fatalities in Anne Arundel County. The Republican bill offers no solutions for this drug crisis. In fact, it makes it worse by dramatically cutting Medicaid and ending the requirement that addiction services and treatment be covered by States.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, 1.3 million people are receiving treatment for substance abuse disorders or mental illnesses under Medicaid expansion. In Maryland, Medicaid pays for nearly 40 percent of all addiction treatment medication.

Without this expansion, the clear majority of those people would either fall into the treatment gap, unable to receive substance abuse treatment because of a lack of insurance or public funds, or be forced to wait months or years to get into publicly-funded treatment programs.

The so-called flexibility Congressional Republicans want to give States would only mean less funding for substance abuse. This is a step in the wrong direction, at a time when we are facing this urgent public health crisis.

Reducing access to addiction treatment would lead to more drug overdose deaths and more trips to our emergency rooms. We know that untreated addiction leads to more crime and more homelessness. Again, I worry that the proposals being offered in this House could cost the lives of thousands of people in my State and around the country.

The GOP plan for repeal will hurt a lot of people: the 24 million Americans who will be uninsured; the millions of middle-income families, especially the elderly, who will pay thousands of dollars more for care; the 33 million children and 10 million people with disabilities impacted by Medicaid cuts; the 390,000 women who will lose care if Planned Parenthood is defunded.

But these aren't just numbers in a CBO report, they are the dialysis patient in Upper Marlboro, or the family whose son is finally getting the addiction treatment he needs in Severna Park.

Mr. Speaker, let us think about all of these families before we vote on this ill-conceived and ill-advised bill. Let's not put partisanship before patients.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Pastor Chris Bell, 3 Circle Church, Fairhope, Alabama, offered the following prayer:

Our Lord and Father, I come to You today in this place of government of the Nation that I love to ask for Your hand of blessing and guiding wisdom upon the leadership of these United States of America.

We know that all good gifts come from Your hand, and this beautiful and free Nation in which we live is one of those gifts.

We thank You today for the many ways that You have blessed us, from our bountiful natural resources to our freedom to work and to speak and to worship.

And it is because of these blessings that You have also given us a great responsibility to our world to live and to lead by example.

So, by Your grace today, I humbly ask that You would help these leaders of our Nation and our citizens to be a continued light in the darkness.

We confess now our need for Your help and Your guidance. Please place Your mighty hand on us today, for You have told us in Your Word to trust not in our own understanding, but to trust You and acknowledge You in all of our ways and You would make our path straight. May we do this today and in the future.

It is in the name of our Lord, Jesus, I pray.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BYRNE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### WELCOMING PASTOR CHRIS BELL

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, it is written in Philippians 4:6:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

As this body debates important issues, it is critical we begin with prayer. I am honored my constituent Pastor Chris Bell was able to lead today's prayer.